

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EA-07 TRSE-00 AID-05 OMB-01 EB-08 /082 W

-----031990 081329Z /45

R 081040Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3556

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 0744

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, NS

SUBJ: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SURINAM

1. ELECTIONS FOR SURINAM'S PARLIAMENT, THE FIRST SINCE INDEPENDENCE, ARE SCHEDULED FOR OCT 31 AND THE CAMPAIGN IS ALREADY WELL UNDER WAY. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, CERTAIN ISSUES ARE BECLOUDING WHAT WOULD ALREADY BE A RATHER MURKY SITUATION.

2. ON AUG 4 CYRIEL KARG, CLOSE CONFIDANT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS MINISTER BRUMA, WAS CONVICTED OF MISUSING GOVERNMENT MONEY FOR HIS OWN ADVANTAGE TO THE AMOUNT OF SF91,000 (ABOUT \$55 000) AND SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS IN JAIL. THIS CANNOT BUT WEAKEN FURTHER BRUMA'S POSITION ALREADY MADE SHAKY BY THE LACK OF SUCCESS OF HIS ECONOMIC SCHEMES.

3. WILLY SOEMITA, ERSTWHILE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, CONTINUES TO LANGUISH IN CUSTODY AWAITING TRIAL FOR EXTORTION AND EMBEZZLEMENT OF GOVERNMENT MONEY IN AMOUNTS FAR GREATER THAN THOSE ATTRIBUTED TO KARG. SOEMITA'S TRIAL BEFORE A SPECIAL TRIBUNAL OF THE SUPREME COURT (BECAUSE OF HIS STATUS AS MINISTER AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT) HAS TWICE OPENED BUT EACH TIME SOEMITA'S LAWYERS IMMEDIATELY ENTERED PROCEDURAL OBJECTIONS WHICH LED TO EXTENDED POSTPONEMENTS. ONE THEORY IN THE PRESS IS THAT SOEMITA WILL CONTINUE TO DELAY HIS TRIAL BEYOND THE DATE FOR THE REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES FOR THE ELECTIONS AND CALL ON THE GOVERNING COALITION,

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COURT (BECAUSE OF HIS STATUS AS MINISTER AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT) HAS TWICE OPENED BUT EACH TIME SOEMITA'S LAWYERS IMMEDIATELY ENTERED PROCEDURAL OBJECTIONS WHICH LED TO EXTENDED POSTPONEMENTS. ONE THEORY IN THE PRESS IS THAT SOEMITA WILL CONTINUE TO DELAY HIS TRIAL BEYOND THE DATE FOR THE REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATES FOR THE ELECTIONS AND CALL ON THE GOVERNING COALITION,

THE VERY GROUP WHICH FIRED HIM AS MINISTER, TO GIVE HIM
A PLACE ON THE ELECTION CANDIDATE LIST BECAUSE
A MAN MUST BE CONSIDERED INNOCENT UNTIL AND
UNLESS HE IS FOUND GUILTY, THUS PUTTING PRIME MINISTER
ARRON IN A REAL BIND.

4. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS BAD BLOOD ALLEGEDLY BETWEEN
ARRON'S NPS PARTY AND BRUMA'S PNR. ARRON WANTS TO TAKE IN
GEORGE HINDORIE, THE DISSIDENT HINDUSTANI, AS A MEMBER OF
THE COMBINATION OF PARTIES, PARTLY TO REWARD HIM FOR HIS
ADVOCACY OF INDEPENDENCE IN 1975 AND PARTLY TO GRACE
THE COMBINATION LIST WITH A HINDUSTANI NAME. TO DO THIS,
HOWEVER, WILL MEAN BOUNCING ONE OR MORE PRESENT PARLIAMENT
MEMBERS FURTHER DOWN THE LIST, AND THE PNR SUSPECTS IT
WILL BE THEIR MEN.

5. WHILE ALL THIS IS GOING ON, OPPOSITION LEADER LACHMON
IS MAKING HAY WHETHER THE SUN SHINES OR IT RAINS. HE
IS SAID TO BE ABOUT TO CHANGE THE NAME OF HIS GROUP
AGAIN, TO RID IT OF ITS HINDUSTANI CONNOTATIONS, AND
TO SET UP A MULTI-ETHNIC BLOC FOR THE ELECTIONS THAT
WOULD HAVE PROMINENT CREOLES AND JAVANESE, PERHAPS AS
MANY AS ONE-THIRD OF THE TOTAL, THUS HOPING TO CAPITALIZE
ON A CLEARLY-GROWING DISTRUST OF POLITICS BY RACE IN FAVOR
OF TREATING ALL SURINAMERS AS PARTICIPATORS IN THE SOCIETY
IN SPITE OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES.
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6. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY FOR ANY KIND OF PREDICTIONS.
LACHMON CLAIMS HE WILL GET 25 OR 26 SEATS IN THE 39
SEAT LEGISLATURE, THUS PERHAPS A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY.
ARRON'S COHORTS ARE NOT ALL THAT OPTIMISTIC, AND TALK
ABOUT WINNING BY A SEAT OR TWO, BUT STILL WINNING.

7. OUTSIDE THE TWO MAJOR BLOCS, THE PRO-PEKING COMMUNIST
GROUP UNDER KEERVELD AND SEVERAL TINY SPLINTER PARTIES
HAVE MET UNDER A PHOTO OF MAO TSE-TUNG AND PROCLAIMED
THE "THIRD BLOC" IN HOPE OF GETTING A SEAT OR TWO AND GAINING
THE BALANCE OF POWER; NOBODY GIVES THEM ANY SUCH CHANCE,
HOWEVER. THE PRO-MOSCOW COMMUNISTS, STRANGELY LED BY A CHINESE
LI PAW SAM, ARE THE ONLY ONES RUNNING BY THEMSELVES, SETTING
UP NO BLOC OF PARTIES, AND LEAVING SURINAMERS WONDERING WHETHER
THE NEW PRC EMBASSY, NOW ABOUT THE LARGEST IN TOWN, IS GOING
TO THROW WHATEVER WEIGHT IT CAN MUSTER (NOT MUCH)
BEHIND A CHINESE PRO-MOSCOW MAN OR A CREOLE PRO-PEKING
TYPE. ZURHELLEN

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Message Attributes

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